

## Overview

In this activity you will conduct a formal letter knowledge assessment and use the information you gather to adapt your instruction to your children's needs.

## Objectives

- To use the CIRCLE-recommended "Letter Identification Checklist" to assess children's letter knowledge.
- To reflect on the results of the assessment.
- To use your assessment results to adapt instruction and support children as needed.

## Materials

- Alphabet Cards (two cards for each letter of the alphabet: one for uppercase and one for lowercase)
- "Letter Identification Checklist," below
- "Reflection Sheet," below
- "Planning for the Future" activity sheet, below

## Instructions

1. Conduct the assessment, by following the steps below.

Note: In this activity, you will use alphabet cards to assess your children's letter knowledge. While these cards are a wonderful *assessment* tool, remember that flash cards and letter drilling are not CIRCLE-recommended *instruction* tools.

When conducting any assessment, it is important to make children feel comfortable. Assessments should be as playful as possible, and they should not feel like tests.

- Choose three children to work with. You will assess each child individually.
- Write the date and the child's name at the top of the "Letter Knowledge Checklist."
- Show the child the alphabet cards one at a time, and ask, "Do you know this letter?"
  - Remember to shuffle the alphabet cards, so they appear in a random order.
  - You may substitute letter cut-outs, like those used by Angel. She has the children pull them from a bag at random.

- For each letter that the child is able to identify, make a mark on the checklist. Remember to use both upper- and lowercase letters.
2. Fill out the “Reflection Sheet.”
    - Use the “Reflection Sheet” to record what you observed while conducting each assessment.
    - Note letters that each child recognized immediately, and letters that proved difficult or impossible to identify. Take special note of how children responded to letters in their own names.
    - Under “Special Considerations/Notes,” remind yourself of any extenuating circumstances that might have influenced the assessments.
      - Was the child moody or grumpy that day?
      - Was the child talkative or quiet?
      - Was there anything about your interaction with that child that might have influenced the assessment?
    - In the “Trends” section, take special note of any letters that all three children knew, or that none of them were familiar with.
  3. Plan ways to adapt your instruction using the “Planning for the Future” activity sheet. Use the information gathered during the three assessments, your completed “Reflection Sheet,” and everything you knew about these children prior to this activity to plan ways to adapt your letter knowledge instruction to meet your children’s needs.
    - Consider the needs/abilities of individual children.
    - Consider the needs/abilities of the group.
  4. Reflect on your experiences with this activity and have your thoughts and notes ready to share with other teachers in the next *Share Ideas*.
    - What did you learn about your children’s letter knowledge strengths and weaknesses from this assessment?
    - How were you able to use the plan, teach, assess, reflect cycle to discover ways to make your letter knowledge instruction more effective?

**CIRCLE Tip**

Teachers who are seeking to improve their practice typically use a cycle of assessment, reflection, and planning. *Assessment* provides critical information about the results of one’s current practice. *Reflection* gives the teacher an opportunity to figure out what this information says about what the child has learned and what the child still needs to learn. In *planning* the teacher uses both the assessment information and the results of his/her reflection to tailor instruction to meet each child’s needs.

**CIRCLE Tip**

Keep in mind that the “Letter Identification Checklist” is not a diagnostic tool, but rather a way for you to check in on your children’s letter knowledge development. If you are concerned about a child’s letter knowledge or broader language development, try to focus on that child’s learning in one-on-one settings or in small groups as much as possible. You might also want to recommend ways that the child’s parents can scaffold letter knowledge and language development at home. If your concerns persist, seek guidance from an administrator in your school.

## **Letter Identification Checklist: Upper- and Lowercase Letters**

Note: When assessing young children's letter knowledge, show them one large letter at a time, not a page with multiple letters on it. (The checklist on the next page is for teacher's note-taking purposes only.)

Procedure:

1. Arrange the uppercase letter cards in the same sequence found on the checklist below.
2. Ask one child at a time to identify the uppercase letter on the card.
3. Place a check next to each uppercase letter the child can identify.
4. Ask the child to identify the sound that letter makes or say a word that begins with that sound.
5. Now, arrange the lowercase letter cards, and follow the same procedure as above.
6. Depending on the child's attention span, this assessment can be completed over the course of several days. This assessment should be given at the beginning and again at the end of the school year.

## Letter Identification Checklist

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Uppercase Letter	Letter Name	Lowercase Letter	Letter Name	Letter Sound/Word
A		a		
F		f		
K		k		
P		p		
W		w		
Z		z		
B		b		
H		h		
O		o		
J		j		
U		u		
C		c		
Y		y		
L		l		
Q		q		
M		m		
D		d		
N		n		
S		s		
X		x		
I		i		
E		e		
G		g		
R		r		
V		v		
T		t		

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Reflection Sheet

### Individual Reflections

Child's Name: _____
Letters easy to identify: _____
_____
Letters difficult to identify: _____
_____
Special Considerations/Notes: _____
_____
_____

Child's Name: _____
Letters easy to identify: _____
_____
Letters difficult to identify: _____
_____
Special Considerations/Notes: _____
_____
_____

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Letters easy to identify: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Letters difficult to identify: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Special Considerations/Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **Trends**

Letters all children found easy to identify: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Letters all children found difficult to identify: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Planning for the Future

Armed with the information you gathered during your three assessments and your reflections, you are ready to plan to move forward with your letter knowledge instruction. You might adapt your instruction to the needs of an individual child or the class as a whole.

Create your own action plan in the spaces below, per the following example:

Assessment Information: *Zeke had trouble identifying the letter z.*

Reflection Information: *Since Zeke can pick out his name on the letter wall, his difficulty recognizing z probably has to do with it appearing outside a familiar context.*

Plan: *Expose Zeke to the letter z in new contexts, by using picture word cards like “zebra,” “zither,” and “zigzag.”*

Assessment  
Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Reflection  
Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Plan: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Assessment  
Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Reflection  
Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Plan: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Assessment  
Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Reflection  
Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Plan: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_